

The Isis Pedlar Short Guide

The Isis Pedlar by Monica Hughes

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Overview

The Isis Pedlar opens with the arrival of Michael Flynn and his daughter Moira, in their small spaceship, to an orbiting position around the planet Isis near the star called Ra. Mike reads about Isis in a catalogue of planets, but keeps the listing from Moira while she works on repairing their spaceship. Distracting Moira by his manipulative sweet-talk, Mike takes one of their small transports down to the planet.

Once she has jury-rigged repairs, Moira realizes her father disabled their communications radio before landing on a colony planet quarantined because the settlers are in a non-technological phase. She heads down to Isis to get Mike off the planet before he can cause enough trouble to hurt people or be put in jail again.

When Mike arrives in the only settled valley, Isis, a dapper little peacock who meets children in homespun style by giving out a few marbles and suggesting a few ways for some of the children to control each other or catch larks, Mike learns that he can manipulate these people to his own gain.

Searching for her father, Moira lands on Isis as well. In a beautiful valley she finds the grave of Olwen, Keeper of the Isis Light.

Guardian, her robot friend, has stood inactive over her grave for three years, but reactivates at the sound of Moira's voice.

He confirms that Moira should remove her father from Isis before he can do much harm.

Young David N'Kumo, nephew of Jody N'Kumo, hears the stranger Michael Flynn pass for an emissary from the near-legendary Guardian and begin manipulating the valley's president, a lackluster man of little confidence. Before long, Mike convinces the people of the valley to abandon their harvest and mine gemstones for him, in trade for a "forever machine" which will give them addictive cakes. Some boys cage larks, which disgusts David.

David leaves the valley and finds Moira— a stranger. She brings him to Guardian, and they plan together to take Mike's power belt, to make Mike unable to perform more tricks. But Mike stuns Moira even as David hides the stolen belt in the shelter cave.

Moira is locked up in an empty house at Mike's bidding and forgotten there as David sounds the signal that a storm is approaching. With the help of a child, Moira frees herself and the caged larks. David shames Mike for forgetting Moira and brings her to shelter. In the crowded cave, Mike despairs at the wreck of his transport in the storm, trapping him on a planet of ignorant farmers.

Anger and resentment run high among the valley people, but as they begin (for the first time in the history of Isis) to threaten violence against Mike Flynn, David, and David's uncle Jody for protecting him, they halt at the sight of Guardian. The robot warns the



people against violence and says that Flynn is no emissary but has kept them from the necessary harvest. Before withdrawing, Guardian greets Jody as an old friend; this may contribute to the prompt election of Jody as the valley's new president.

Jody's first acts as president are to banish Mike Flynn from Isis and ask his people to return to harvesting their crops. Moira despairs at leaving David and continuing to look after her father, but Mike tells her to stay, for he will not have her moping around the galaxy with him. Guardian offers to travel with Mike in her stead, learning about all the modern changes and keeping Mike out of trouble. Moira is free to marry David and share her knowledge with the people of Isis, giving them the chance to grow beyond their ignorance of technology and be freed from their quarantine.

About the Author

Monica Hughes was born Monica Ince in Liverpool, England, on November 3, 1925. Her parents then both worked at the University of Liverpool, her father, E. L. Ince, a Welshman, in mathematics and her mother, Phyllis Fry, an Englishwoman, in biology. A few months after young Hughes's birth, her parents left Liverpool so that her father could take up a new position as head of the department of mathematics at the new University of Cairo in Egypt.

Young Hughes's first memories are of Egypt: their first house in Heliopolis, walks in the desert with the nanny for Hughes and her younger sister, and seeing mirages of palm trees and buildings floating in the sky. Later they lived in an apartment in Cairo, with a spectacular view of the pyramids, which they visited on weekends. Her parents climbed the Great Pyramid for the view, while the girls played with bottlecaps littered in the sand at its base. "So much for history," sighed Hughes in *Something about the Author* Autobiography Series. She still remembers little lizards, birds of prey, and the wind-blown sand; these and other memories became elements in her novels *Sandwriter* and *The Promise*.

The Ince family returned to England in 1931 so the girls could attend school in a suburb of London. Young Hughes was pleased and excited by the exposure to music and a wider range of books, particularly Norse mythology and the works of E. Nesbit. For a while she wanted to be an archaeologist and Egyptologist, but seeing Boris Karloff in the film *The Mummy* gave her nightmares for weeks and put an end to that ambition.

When the Ince family moved to Edinburgh in 1936, young Hughes found refuge from the plain, cold city and boring school by borrowing books from the nearby Carnegie library. She plunged into the dramas of nineteenth-century writers and the works of Jules Verne. All her small allowance went on hardcover blank books in which she would write exciting titles and "Chapter One." Then she would sit and dream of being a famous writer. That and a journal kept when she went on vacations was all the writing she did at that time.

When the Second World War began in 1939, Hughes and her sister were sent away, first to an isolated hunting lodge in Scotland and later to a boarding school in Harrogate, not far from the Yorkshire moors where the Bronte sisters had lived. There she was encouraged to write fiction, as well as essays and compositions.

After her father died, Hughes could no longer plan to go to Oxford; Edinburgh University was the best the family could afford. At age sixteen she began an honors mathematics degree, though the English lecturers were far more interesting to her.

At eighteen, she volunteered for service in the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS), was sent down to London, and spent two years working with thousands of other Wrens, as women who served in the WRNS were called, on the secret project of breaking the



German code. Every free moment she had, young Hughes spent in the gallery of the New Theatre watching ballet.

After the war, Hughes transferred into meteorology, first in Scotland and then Belfast, where she was delighted to find food rationing a thing of the past. When she left the WRNS in 1946, she lived in Chelsea with her mother and sister. For a few years she worked freelance as a dress designer, before taking a friend's advice and traveling to visit South Africa and Rhodesia (now called Zimbabwe). She lived and worked with that friend's sister and husband for two years, making first-run dresses for a local factory and later working in a bank.

Her journey to Africa and back stayed long in her memory, and her experiences filtered into many of the books she would later write.

Living once again with her mother and sister in an unheated London apartment got her thinking about the sun. Australia seemed to be the place to emigrate, but the waiting list was three years long. Hughes left for Canada instead, in April of 1952, intending to work her way across to the west coast and pick up a ship across the Pacific to Australia. Working in Ottawa, Ontario, in the National Research Council, she began writing stories to combat the loneliness she felt.

At a writing class at the YMCA she met a woman who became her best friend in Canada and who introduced Hughes to Glen Hughes, who became her husband in 1957.

The Hugheses lived in Ontario, moving from Cornwall, to Toronto, and then London with Glen's work. Hughes began writing again in the late evening and early morning, as well as caring for their four children. When the youngest was a week old in 1964, they moved to Edmonton, Alberta, driving on the new Trans Canada Highway across the seemingly endless prairies—a trip that she remembered twelve years later when writing her novel *Earthdark*, and which brings to mind the colonists' journey to Isis in *The Keeper of the Isis Light*.

This began a furiously creative time for Monica Hughes: she painted in oils, embroidered wall hangings, wove tapestries, and wrote, but never sold a single short story, article, or novel.

With the death of her mother and sister, and as her children grew older, Monica Hughes had few touchstones to her past memories. In 1971 she resolved to spend a year writing for four hours each day. She read armloads of books by the best writers for young people. After some unfruitful efforts, she was inspired by a Jacques Cousteau movie *The Silent World* to begin her novel *Crisis on Conshelf Ten*. In 1974 it was accepted by a British publisher, who asked for another story about the lead character.

Since then, Monica Hughes has written over thirty books for young people. Her works have been translated into over a dozen languages. Though she did eventually tour Australia and New Zealand in 1990 with her husband, she feels firmly settled in Canada

with her husband, grown children, and grandchildren. In the winter of 2001, with new projects in hand, she fully intends to write as long as she possibly can.



Setting

The novel is set a few hundred years in the future, entirely on the fictional planet Isis, the fourth planet in orbit around an F5 star called Ra, in the constellation Indus, about five parsecs from Earth's own sun in the Milky Way galaxy. The author had a good deal of scientific information which she used to make informed guesses about what it could be like for people to live on a distant planet, one with thinner air than Earth and a brighter sun that emits more ultraviolet light than the Earth's sun.

Hughes suggests that Isis would become a colony planet only after the more "comfortable" planets near Earth were already in use. Humans would find the deeper valleys of the planet Isis more comfortable than the mountains—the air would be thicker and so easier to breathe, and it would screen out more of the ultraviolet light. The mountains and mesas would be beautiful, in the author's opinion as mountains often are on Earth, and particularly so on Isis where there are small plants and living creatures to enjoy as well as the stunning views and clean winds.

This is the third novel in a trilogy, set more than eighty Earth years after the Isis colony was founded. The character David N'Kumo is a young man, nephew of the Jody N'Kumo who met Guardian and Olwen in *The Guardian of Isis*, who was the grandson of the Jody N'Kumo rescued by Olwen in *The Keeper of the Isis Light*. The passage of generations matters much more to David N'Kumo's community than the precise counting of years since their colony was founded. Since the time of President Mark London, the colony has abandoned modern 230 The Isis Pedlar technology and higher learning, and makes do with not only an agrarian lifestyle but also with non-scientific beliefs.

Social Sensitivity

The work of Monica Hughes, like most science fiction, is international in its scope.

She deals with global issues but gives them substance in a way that makes them immediate and connects the personal with the political; the best example of this is how Hughes links the sociological theme of *The Isis Pedlar* with the theme of Moira's being torn between her father and David.

It is morally, ethically, socially, and legally wrong for Mike Flynn to land on the quarantined planet Isis and exploit the settlers' ignorance. Hughes goes to considerable efforts to make it clear that Mike is not a castaway minimizing the impact of his presence.

Monica Hughes has been called "Canada's finest writer of science fiction for children" by critic Sarah Ellis in *Horn Book* magazine. Ellis goes on to say: "There is a gentleness to her books that is rare in science fiction. The hairsbreadth escapes, the exotic flora and fauna, ... the villains and the heroes—all are enclosed in one overriding concern, subtle but ever-present: the value of kindness."

Literary Qualities

Hughes has a natural writing style, which sustains all her novels. When writing her book *The Tomorrow City*, Hughes developed an awareness of two halves of her mind: the right brain (imaginative, holistic, in touch with one's dreams and subconscious) and the left brain (linear, logical, from which comes language, without which stories cannot be written). From this understanding of how to tap into her right brain came Hughes's ability to construct a story which would be of interest, make sense, and mean something important to the reader.

Hughes focuses on character to a great extent in this novel. The character of Guardian is clearly derived to a great extent from the character Spock (created by producer Gene Roddenberry and actor Leonard Nimoy) on the classic television series *Star Trek*, broadcast in 1968-70 when the author Monica Hughes was raising her own children.

His impassive face, his many talents, his superior knowledge and scientific analysis, his efforts to be logical, and his distress when his feelings interfere with the prompt completion of his duties—these are all traits Guardian shares with the half-Vulcan Spock.

Guardian shows considerably more emotional interaction than Spock, his literary ancestor. His physical strengths and intellectual achievements are subtly shown in his accomplishments, rather than stated baldly as the narrative progresses. This is an excellent example of the truism taught in creative writing departments around the world: "SHOW the reader what happens, don't TELL the reader."

Hughes makes no effort in *The Isis Pedlar* to be ambiguous about Guardian being seen as a robot, as she did in *The Keeper of the Isis Light*. Not until the last pages of that novel did Olwen see Guardian as a created thing.

But in this book, from the first moment Moira speaks with Guardian, she is aware he is a robot, and she speaks to him with courtesy as a thinking being. Through the use of dialogue, it is very clear that David, Jody, and the author consider Guardian to be a person, by every definition that counts and the wisest person on Isis at that.

The genesis of this novel came long before it was written. Monica Hughes finds story ideas everywhere. Thoughts drifting through her head, the question "What would happen if..." the curiosity about a passer by—these can be the tiny seed out of which grows a novel. On October 1, 1974, she read a newspaper article about a boy named David, condemned to an isolated life because of a faulty immune system. "The story moved me deeply," Hughes said in a personal interview. "I cut it out and filed it in my 'Ideas' file, where I place every thought, chance news story, passing event or character, that I feel may one day be a story." She kept the clipping in her "Ideas" file for five years, read it at least ten times, and worried about it. She realized that what was in her mind was the question: "David, are you lonely?" To answer this question by researching the real David would be a horrible invasion of privacy, she knew, so she resolved to find a



character in a situation similar to David's, put this person in a story, and then ask him or her this question.

First she thought about isolated places such as lighthouses, but nowhere on Earth is anyone very isolated these days. "Then I realised the strength of science fiction— that by taking my character to a planet far away from Earth, alone, I would achieve a real isolation," Hughes said in a personal interview. "This had to be done logically, and the working out of this logic gave me my initial plot development, of Olwen, alone on Isis after the death of her parents, alone except for Guardian." From her thoughts about isolation and loneliness came her novel *The Keeper of the Isis Light*, and two sequels. These are her most popular and celebrated works to date.

It appears that the author was inspired to write the second book of the trilogy by her character Guardian's assessment of Mark London. Hughes took that brief scene, and in answering the questions it brought to her mind, made clear what the daily lives of the settlers were like under Mark's oppressive rule, and what the results would be if one young man grew up still open to ideas and to change.

It seems as well that Hughes was inspired to write this third novel of the trilogy, *The Isis Pedlar*, by wondering what would happen to this isolated little community, ignorant of technology and so vulnerable to any fast-talking opportunist who might come by. Answering these new questions led her to creating this opportunist: the dynamic and multi-talented Mike Flynn, a likeable but self-serving scoundrel, who dominates every scene of the novel, whether present and bright as a peacock in his natty suit or absent but driving his daughter frantic in her efforts to keep him from causing harm. Mike's inventive schemes and his ability to improvise without a script give him control over every situation—until his daughter puts her head together with David and together they come up with a solution that depends on David's speed and his knowledge of Isis, and Moira's knowledge of her father's techniques and tools.

Along with her "Ideas" file, Hughes keeps copies of a series of personal essays written on the origin of most of her books. Many readers write to Hughes through her publisher or Web site, asking "Where do you get your ideas for your stories?" On her Web site, Hughes has posted these essays describing the ideas, thoughts, and analysis that were the origins of many of her novels.

She is also generous with printed copies of these essays for readers, teachers, and librarians with questions.



Themes and Characters

To understand this book, it is necessary to know at least the summary of the first two books in the "Isis" trilogy. The first book in Monica Hughes's "Isis" trilogy, *The Keeper of the Isis Light*, was arguably her best work. It was both a love story and a poignant comment on prejudice. Hughes explored, in this light adventure romance, the nature of what it means to be human. The second book in the "Isis" trilogy, *The Guardian of Isis*, took the colony from its founding to agrarian success but technological ignorance under the rule of President Mark London.

Guardian and *Olwen* restored a less superstitious state of affairs, with young Jody's help, as the novel ends. In the second book, Mark's wilful imposition of ignorance was shown to be as wicked as malice.

In this third and final book of the "Isis" trilogy, *The Isis Pedlar*, the colony has progressed to a nearly idyllic state, still mostly ignorant of technology and higher learning but also mostly ignorant of dominance, violence, and superstition. This is a considerable improvement from the second book, but the colonists are still vulnerable to the influences of an outsider. As for Moira, her sense of responsibility for her father rightly extends to halting his scam, but unjustly to the extent that she is not free to fall in love, marry, and make her own life.

In this book, the settlers' ignorance and innocence are shown to be vulnerable to lying and manipulation, particularly because Mike Flynn makes unfair use of his knowledge and technology. He takes advantage of people who hardly recognize at first how they can be dominated or lied to or even addicted. His actual tools and tricks, with the exception of the addictive cakes, are not criminal, but they are used for deception.

Though this novel is told from multiple viewpoints, including the president of the valley and one of the children, there are three central characters who are the focus of the action: Michael Flynn, his daughter Moira, and David N'Kumo. By not telling the story from within a single character's viewpoint, the author is making it clear that this is a story of appearances and perception, not simply an action-adventure of one hero's experiences.

David is the nephew of Jody N'Kumo who was the grandson of the Jody rescued by *Olwen* in the first book. He is darkskinned, like his N'Kumo ancestors because of their East African heritage. This young man is the fastest runner and swimmer on Isis, and as daring as his uncle Jody proved himself in the second novel of the trilogy.

As well, he is as interested in new ideas as his uncle Jody. From his first meeting with Moira Flynn, he is smitten, and in a matter of hours they are in love.

Moira is as ready for a captivating life partner as David. When the novel opens, she is frustrated by the perpetual repairs she must make on their little, wearing-out spaceship, and as frustrated by the perpetual maintenance needed by her father. This young



woman has looked after her father, cooking and cleaning and bailing him out of jails and petty scrapes since she was ten years old. Somehow, this bright and resourceful young woman has not internalized her father's contempt for innocents and rules. She will not let his greed ruin the people of Isis. With her father to look out for, Moira has almost no hope left of ever having a family and a home of her own. She is charmed by Isis, the prettiest and simplest place she has visited in a life of trailing her father through confidence schemes and low-life dives.

Isis is also the prettiest and simplest place Michael Flynn has seen in a long time, and he knows just how to take advantage of it. Mike is as quick-witted as his daughter, but always uses it to his own advantage.

Here on Isis he plans to gain a treasure of precious stones, mined for him by the settlers who will work themselves to exhaustion on the cliff above their valley instead of harvesting their fall crops. In exchange, he will leave them a few addictive cakes, instead of the unlimited supply he promises from a "forever machine." Mike has no interest in being thwarted by his daughter.

He has no sense of shame or guilt about the lies he tells, the injuries the settlers suffer, or the negative social behaviors he is teaching the people of Isis.

Even when his plans are all ruined, Mike's regret is only that he believes his daughter is lost in a storm (because he forgets to order her brought from confinement to shelter), and that with his transport to his space ship wrecked in the storm, he is trapped on Isis among ignorant farmers. Even when judged by the new president of the valley, Mike seems chipper enough to try his wiles again, if he were not sent away. The only act of goodwill he has learned to perform is not to imprison Moira, not even as his keeper.

The president of the valley, when Mike and Moira Flynn come to Isis, is one of Mark London's sons. This London is far less confident, competent, or domineering than his late father. He is very vulnerable to Mike Flynn's flattery and tricks, and his presidency does not survive Mike's influence. The reader can tell that Mark London's shadow still hangs over the community a generation after his long life ended, and he enjoys a far greater influence on Isis than he would likely have known in a lifetime on Earth. Guardian's assessment of him (that Mark is a failure as a farmer, but should have become a politician) is eerily realized in the second and third books of the trilogy.

The sociological themes of the novel are made clear in simple deeds, but the themes themselves are not trivial. Through small incidents and decisions, such as which child will inform the adults of Flynn's arrival in the valley and whether the leader eats dinner in his own home rather than with the community, the reader is shown the cooperative behaviors of the settlers and how these behaviors contrast with the suggestions made by Flynn. Mike does not encourage the children or the president to feel proud of their individual strengths and accomplishments, but entices them to wield power over one another and to gain confidence not from being strong and able, but from making decisions for others.



The settlers have been leading an agrarian lifestyle that is not perfectly idyllic, but which has many positive aspects, not the least of which is that a reasonable amount of work will feed, clothe, and shelter everyone in the community. Everyone in this valley works co-operatively, rather like the inhabitants of a twentieth-century Earth kibbutz or Hutterite collective farm, and no one gets more food or goods or respect at the expense of anyone else. Mike Flynn is a serpent in this Eden, bringing concepts and behaviors by which the settlers have been untroubled for generations.

The second volume in the trilogy, *The Guardian of Isis*, was shocking in its depiction of how low the colony had sunk. Forgotten were the hopeful dreams of colonizing much of Isis and the technology that could help the settlers achieve these goals.

They lived in a superstitious, primitive state, ruled by the rigid Mark London. The only inquisitive person was curious young Jody, grandson of the Jody rescued by Olwen, who constantly earned President Mark's wrath. When Jody was banished for his interfering actions, he met Guardian and the aged Olwen and learned the true, rather than the mythical, history of Isis. Returning to the colony, he and Guardian saved it from flooding. Jody remembered that he is a lion-killer, like his ancestors from East Africa. He became, both literally and metaphorically, "determined to lead his people out of their narrow Valley and show them the rest of their new world."

But it is not until the end of the third book, *The Isis Pedlar*, however, that Jody finally comes into the leadership that will enable him to do this. Through the efforts of David and Moira, helped by Guardian and lastly by Jody, the settlers are freed from the influence of Mike Flynn and the violence he has almost invoked. The valley is ready to be led by a president who has respect for their non-violent and sharing society, but also ideas which will free them from the restricting ignorance imposed by Mark London.

The book ends on an amusing note when Guardian suggests he leave with Flynn to take care of him. Now that Olwen has passed away, Guardian needs new challenges and plans to learn about the changing worlds of the galaxy, while keeping Mike out of trouble. The enthusiasm with which Guardian looks forward to the journey is delightful.

Moira is thus free in good conscience from her responsibility to care for her father. She can marry David and stay on Isis, teaching them about mathematics and science, with Jody as the valley's new progressive president.



Topics for Discussion

1. What is the difference between an entrepreneur and an opportunist?
2. Can a businessman or businesswoman take advantage of an opportunity without exploiting resources or people in a negative way?
3. Do the people of Isis retain any of the prejudice shown by the first eighty colonists against people from outside their own group? What does this mean for Mike and Moira? Or David and Moira?
4. Are technological tools evil by their very nature? What about simpler tools? What about weapons?
5. What has Mike Flynn done that is criminal in intent? What has he done that has had criminal results?
6. Does it matter to you whether Mike Flynn intended to harm any of the settlers physically? Does physical injury matter more to you than the aggression shown by some settlers after Mike's arrival?
7. How is Moira's arrival on Isis and in the settlers' valley unlike her father's arrival? How does she strive not to take advantage of these people, as her father is doing?
8. Why is it so easy for David and Moira to feel attracted to one another? Is it simply that both are young and healthy?
9. What are some ways in which the author Hughes has made varying use of the word "keeper," with different connotations?
10. Why is Guardian no longer bound to be the guardian of Isis and its people? What has he re-discovered in his own essential nature?



Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. Is it possible for Mike Flynn to continue his practice of flitting from planet to planet, without committing crimes? With Guardian to look over all that he does, what sort of life will he be able to lead after leaving Isis? Write a two page summary of Mike and Guardian's travels over the next few months after leaving Isis.

2. How responsible is one family member for another? When are they liable in a court of law? What moral and ethical obligations can family members have for each other? Discuss these questions in a brief essay, and use your discussion to answer the question of why Mike Flynn's daughter does look out for him, instead of asking as Cain did, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

3. Write a brief summary of the history in Europe and North America of the snake-oil salesmen, confidence men, Ponzi schemes, and traveling medicine shows? In what ways are these the background for Hughes's character Mike Flynn?

The Isis Pedlar 235 Describe any positive aspects you can find to the long-standing cultural figure of the traveling liar who cheats a living out of other people's hopes, then leaves.

4. What is the history in Canada of the Dukhobours, the Hutterites, and the Mennonites? What elements of their cultures are unique? Can you find any resemblance between their collectives and the valley of the settlers in the novel The Isis Pedlar? What evidence do you have that the author Monica Hughes was aware of the collective farms of these peoples that existed in Canada at the time she wrote this novel?

5. What is the history in the United States of the Shakers and the Amish? What elements of their cultures are unique?

Can you find any resemblance between their collectives and the valley of the settlers in the novel The Isis Pedlar?

What evidence do you have that the author Monica Hughes was aware of the religious communities of Shakers and Amish that existed in the United States at the time she wrote this novel?

6. Select an excerpt from The Isis Pedlar that describes the clothing of one of the children and that of Michael Flynn when Flynn arrives at the valley. Use it as the basis for images of Flynn and the child.

You can sketch and color your images, or dress dolls or action figures, or make models in Plasticene or modeling clay.

Include an itemized list describing the fabrics you have selected for the clothing.



7. Write a brief essay describing your interpretation of the larks in the novel *The Isis Pedlar*. Does it matter to you that larks are trapped and caged because of a brief suggestion by Mike Flynn, off the top of his head? What of the child's despair when she cannot open the cage?

Is it significant that it is Moira who releases the larks at last?

8. Write an essay describing what Guardian's role has been on Isis, from his first arrival to his decision to leave. How profound is the change in him at Olwen's death? Why does he feel free to leave the planet as the trilogy ends? Is he leaving behind all sense of responsibility?

9. Why do you think David N'Kumo and Moira Flynn fall in love so quickly and easily? Why has Moira given up hope of finding for herself? What has David been looking for in his own life? Is this an example of the sociological urge to breed outside one's own tribe?

For Further Reference

Ellis, Sarah. "News from the North." Horn Book (October 1984): 661. This article contains a positive analysis of Hughes's merit as an author of imaginative writing for young people.

"Monica Hughes." In *Something about the Author Autobiography Series*, vol. 11. Detroit: Gale, 1992. This article provides insight into the life of this author who has lived on four continents and written over thirty books for young adult readers.

Van Luven, Lynne. "And Here's Novel No.

25." *Edmonton Journal* (February 23, 1992): C4. An interview with a photo of Hughes.

Van Luven assesses this local writer as famous, and rightly so for her accomplishments and still being able to lead a practical, quiet life.

Related Titles/Adaptations

Readers who have enjoyed *The Isis Pedlar* should also try the first and second novels in the trilogy: *The Keeper of the Isis Light* and *The Guardian of Isis*, by the same author.

Also to be recommended for their environmental and ethical themes are Hughes's novels *The Golden Aquarians* and *The Crystal Drop*.

Other contemporary authors whose works may be enjoyed by fans of Monica Hughes are Dave Duncan (especially the three young adult novels of his series "The King's Daggers"), Eileen Kernaghan (*Dance of the Snow Dragon* and *The Snow Queen*), and Julie Lawson.

Related Web Sites

Monica Hughes Web Site <http://www.ecn.ab.ca/mhughes> Accessed March 29, 2002.

The author's personal Web site, with interviews, lists for each of her novels, and her home e-mail address. It includes a series of personal essays on the origins of many of her books.



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